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NEW CHRISTMAS LEGEND

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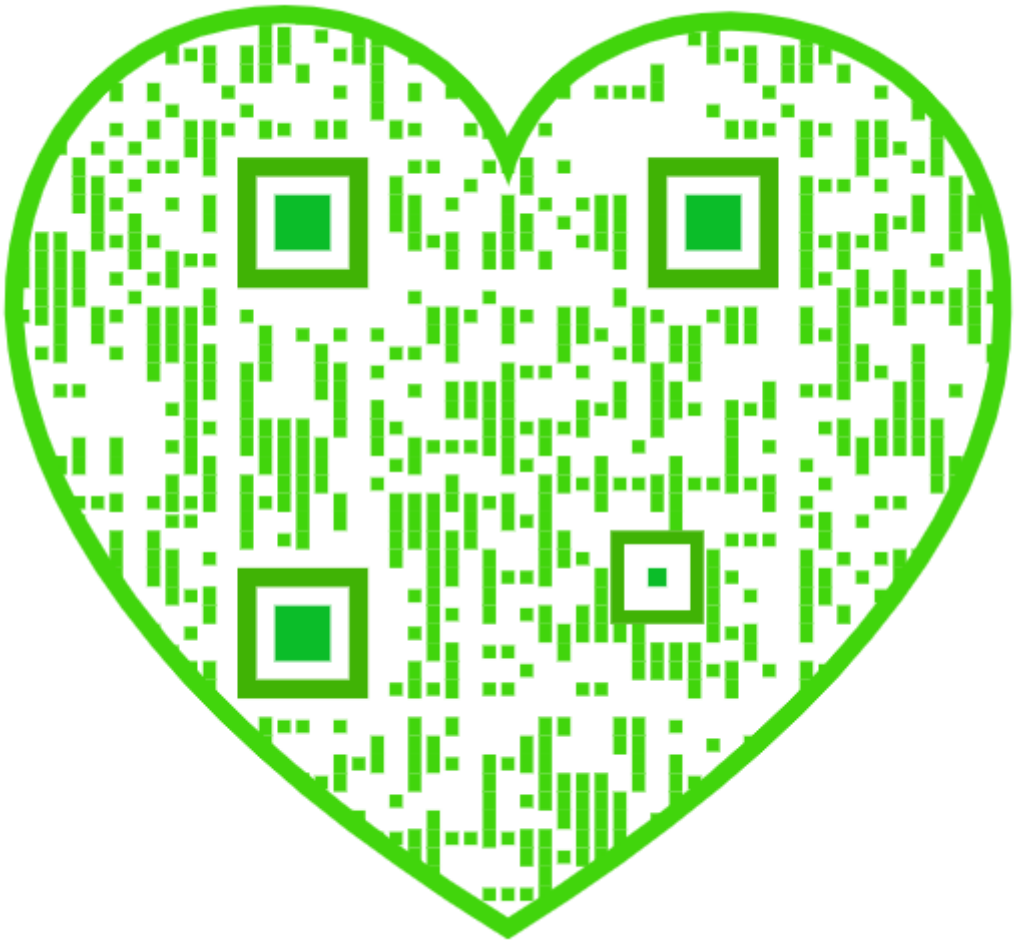

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A NEW CHRISTMAS LEGEND

BY

J. BRADFORD PENGELLY

1916

The Flint Printing Company
Flint, Michigan.

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Flint, Michigan

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To all those who love the Christmas Spirit and try to live in its richness and beauty, and to all those who find in the life and teachings of Christ inspiration to work for a New Social Salvation and the Universal Brotherhood of Man, this Book is lovingly dedicated.

It is dedicated in general to those statesmen, manufacturers, merchants, laborers and thinkers who are striving to bring about a state of society in which justice, co-operation and good will shall be the guiding principles.

It is dedicated in particular to the Vestrymen of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, for they are working and giving to make their city an ideal one. From the characters and works of these men the author has received many impressions which are set forth in this story.

St. Paul's Rectory
Flint, Michigan
December, 1916

Characters

Tisaphernes, a Persian Prince
Benjamin, An Artisan of Damascus
Samuel, a Merchant of Ephesus
Pollycrates, a Teacher of Athens

Setting

Babylonia
Palestine
Damascus
Ephesus
Athens

Time

5 B. C. to 26 A. D.

Book I—In the Days of Caesar

A Vision from Mars Hill
In the Days of Caesar
The Star of Bethlehem
By the Waters of Babylon
The Dream of a Working Man
The Eternal Quest of the Soul

Book II—Pilgrims to the Holy City

A Swing Across the Desert
A Caravan to Jerusalem
O'er Sea and Land
The Birthplace of a King

Book III—The Spread of the Christmas Spirit

War and Peace
Prince and People, a New Kingdom
"To Do Justly and to Love Mercy"
Ideas and Ideals

Book IV—The Generous Christmas Spirit

Gifts from the Nation
Gifts from the Masses
Gifts from the City
Universal Brotherhood

Book V—The Immortality of the Christmas Influence

The King is Dead, Long Live the People
A Gala Day in Ephesus, Remoulding Society
His Last Words

BOOK I

In the Days of Ceasar

In the Days of Caesar

The Star of Bethlehem

By the Waters of Babylon

The Dream of a Working Man

The Eternal Quest of the Soul

A Vision from Mars Hill

In the Days of Caesar

When Caesar ruled in Rome and his legions were all powerful, a child was born in one of the hilly towns on "The Bridge of the World." This child was destined to become a great king and subdue the nations by his power.

For centuries many men had longed and watched for the advent of this child. Ancient books of lore were full of joyful songs about his coming and old histories were ever renewed by the prophecies of the birth of a mighty counsellor, a prince and savior of men.

And now the time had come when the whole earth was atremor and the hearts of men aglow. Everyone and everything seemed to sense the immediateness of a mysterious and wonderful event. The thought that "The Day of the Lord" was at hand pulsated everywhere. The magi scanned the skies with their trained and eager eyes. The lowly shepherds watching the flocks by night turned their faces unconsciously to the heavens with hum-

ble adoration. A divine expectancy welled up in the hearts of men. The time had come when God Himself was going to become man and make His home on earth.

In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Augustus Caesar, being the year 5 B. C., when peace had blessed the Roman world for many moons, the subject peoples of the empire were ordered to their respective cities to be enrolled and to be taxed. In the land of Palestine, "The Bridge of the World," where Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman had in turn marched to and fro with triumphant tread, the Jewish families pilgrimaged to their fathers' cities to be assessed.

The Star of Bethlehem

Lying nested in the hills of Judea like a babe gathered in its mother's arms lies the little town of Bethlehem.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

This was the city of the great king and thither went the families of the royal house of David. Among the families who made this solemn and pathetic journey was the one of Joseph, a carpenter, and his wife Mary. When they arrived in Bethlehem the little town was so crowded that there was no room for them at the inn. Joseph and his wife, being poor, found their quarters in a stable.

Unknown to many and recognized by only a few, a bright star moved as did this holy family, and when the young Mary laid herself down to rest the star rested right above her and its brightness

increased so that all who had waited and watched knew its story. Mary was soon to be delivered of her child, a boy, the anointed one of God.

Men in Palestine, men in Babylonia, men in Damascus, men in Ephesus and men in Athens knew that star for they were ready for its shining.

By the Waters of Babylon

In distant Babylonia there lived a Persian Prince who ruled over a great portion of that wonderful land laved by the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris. His name was Tisapherenes and he was learned in the long history of his land and the many peoples who had ruled or been captives there. He had pondered some of the Jewish legends and had kept in mind the character and sayings of Daniel, a Hebrew captive. The rebuilding of Jerusalem and the coming of a prince who would rule in equity fired his imagination.

Often as he engaged in the mystic rites of his religion and worshipped the great Mazda his fancy followed the fires of the ritual and he saw, "The Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Late in the month of December as Tisaphernes sat one evening upon his housetop looking to the west he dis-

tinguished a new star. He started with joy and rising quickly lifted his hands towards the star and said, "O, Mazda, thou eternal prince of light, praise be thine, that mine eyes have seen the star of Him who will drive the prince of darkness from the hearts of men. O, Mazda, grant that this star may shine every night to lead me until I have found the child."

For a few moments he gazed in rapture at the heavenly token and then folded his arms upon his breast and bowed his head in silent gratitude and meditation. Presently he raised his head and gazed steadfastly at this new light of heaven. His proud and erect bearing; his flowing white robes with crimson borders; his gleaming, black eyes; his strong, refined profile and the spiritual gladness of his face all enhanced by the soft setting of this clear and glorious night made him appear the most princely of men. The whole scene was like an enchanted painting.

Tisaphernes watched the star quietly and adoringly until it sank from view, then he descended into one of the spac-

ious rooms of his palace. He busied himself awhile attending to some of the many details of his state for he was a ruler who loved his people and strove to do his best. When these matters of state had been arranged he called his most trusty servant and told him to prepare himself and his two favorite Arabian steeds for a long journey towards the Great Sea in the west. The servant withdrew and Tisaphernes reclined on one of his couches to dream of the quest of the promised child.

The Dream of a Working Man

In the city of Damascus there lived an artisan by the name of Benjamin who was skilled in working gold, a goldsmith as we should say today. Benjamin was not a Jew, but a Samaritan. He was neither of a princely nor of a priestly nor of a wealthy family. For generations his family had been workingmen who were not ashamed of their calling, but proud of their exceptional skill. Benjamin belonged to the common people.

By regular work of a high order and by the cultivation of quiet and happy habits Benjamin had put aside from his earnings twelve talents of silver, which would equal about six thousand dollars of our money. This was enough to make him more or less independent and was considered a fine achievement, as Benjamin was not old, being only in his fiftieth year. He was alert and athletic. He was intelligent, generous, honest and pious.

Although a Samaritan and an artisan,

Benjamin was not lacking either in religious interests or in the love of learning. He was thoughtful and well read. In the evenings, on holidays and Sabbaths, Benjamin occupied his time in study. He was much taken with the writings of Isaiah who spoke of the coming of a prince who would reign with justice.

> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
>
> Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

He read and pondered other Hebrew prophets and hence his heart was filled with a yearning for a social salvation. He, too, looked for "The Day of the Lord" when a child would be born who would be the friend of the masses, and who would love and sympathize with those who labor because he himself would grow up to know toil.

Many a night found Benjamin sitting alone upon the top of his house, which he owned himself. He knew little about the stars, but a small, still voice inspired him that some night as he watched and prayed for the social salvation of man a sign would appear in the skies.

A joyful restlessness surged in the heart and mind of Benjamin one evening as he walked to his home from a meeting of his fellow laborers where problems relating to their common life had occupied their attention. "This is the night! This is the night!" he said almost aloud as he quickened his steps, "that I shall see the long looked for sign of heaven." He hurried to his favorite spot on the top of his house which faced the southwest. He scanned the skies a moment and then he cried with a restrained voice, "The Star of Bethlehem! The Star of Bethlehem! The promised son is born. I will go and carry him presents and swear my allegiance to him."

The Eternal Quest of the Soul

In the populous and rich city of Ephesus there lived a Jewish merchant who was renowned for his shrewdness and for the success of his factories and stores. His business was the making and marketing of tents. In all of the great centers of Asia Minor he had his houses and agents. He was well known as Samuel the Merchant Prince of Ephesus.

This man was a Jew of the Dispersion and a strict Pharisee. He was learned in the Mosaic law, very devout, faithful in the performance of religious duties and was earnestly waiting for "The Day of the Lord" when God would reveal his salvation in the Holy City and gather Israel under the leadership of the long promised Messiah.

Samuel was regular in attendance at the synagogue and talked much with the rabbi who was a scholarly and spiritual man. The rabbi pondered the revered books of his people. He felt that the time was at hand for the coming of

the anointed one. Accounts of the fervent preaching of one named Simon near the Jordan had reached him and caused him to study all prophecies anew.

One Sabbath as Hillel the rabbi and Samuel the merchant conversed after the reading and explanation of a passage from "The Prophets," Hillel said, "Son, I believe the birthday of the promised King and Redeemer is at hand. All signs seem to point to that event. Can we not watch for the star that our wise men have informed us will appear to tell us of the advent of the Prince of Peace? Did not Isaiah say?"

> Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Samuel's heart leapt for joy and he invited Hillel to join him in the evening to watch for the star. From the top of Samuel's house they looked off to the south. As they watched a sweet silence settled upon them which was hardly broken when Hillel, whose eyes were first to find the star for his mind was trained, said, "Samuel, yonder is the heavenly sign."

Samuel made no reply other than a smile. The joy of that hour was too sublime for words. Each man stood transfigured with ecstacy. Their spirits shone through and surrounded their heads and faces giving them each a halo. What a scene! The rabbi with his stately form; his high brow; his large, thoughtful eyes and his long white beard: the merchant with his quick eyes; his shrewd face; his short dark beard and his somewhat stooped form, blended into a painting silhouetted against the blue sky of this clear night that filled one with the mystery of that indefinable and ineffable quest of the human soul for God and His salvation which will complete the life of man. At last Samuel broke the silence, saying, "Tomorrow I shall start for Jerusalem where I shall find among the wise men the full meaning of this star. Master, wilt thou go?" Hillel replied quietly and resignedly, "My work keeps me here. You go and I will stay at home and pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

A Vision from Mars Hill

In that city which has been the inspiration of science, art, and philosophy for ages, Athens, the mother of the intellect, there lived a thinker by the name of Pollycrates. He had pondered all the works of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. He had read the great epics of his race. The later poets of his country he knew by heart. The histories of Herodotus fascinated him. He was also versed in the Vedas, the sacred books of India; in the Avestas, the sacred books of Zoroaster; and in the "Book of the Dead," the great religious work of the Egyptians. In brief, he had studied all religions, philosophies, sciences and systems of ethics.

Pollycrates was probably fifty-five years old and his appearance was impressive in every bearing and expression. His eyes were large and luminous like the brighter stars; his forehead broad and high; his face had a few light wrinkles that were evidences of concen-

trated thinking. His character was noble and every gesture and look were refined and dignified. He walked or stood or talked with the fine poise of a man who has studied deeply into the inner meaning of life. For such a man as he, all men have the greatest admiration.

One evening as Pollycrates was walking towards his house on the road to the Piraeus he began to think of the remarkable longings of the human heart, of its craving for salvation, immortality and perfection. "Surely," he said to himself, "there is an answer, a rational answer, to these yearnings of the deepest being of man."

Then he recalled the stories that were current in the East of one who would come and bring "life and immortality to light." He remembered that the magi had said the coming of this promised one would be accompanied with signs and wonders. A strange star would appear to let the watching eyes of those who looked for a new revelation know the time.

This thought fixed itself in his fancy

and he searched the skies with earnest eyes. Off to the south there was a star he had never seen before. Pollycrates gazed at it for some time then he went over to the home of a friend, Aristides, who made the stars his special study. Aristides declared this was a new star and that it likely was a token of the Gods and according to prophecy. The answer pleased Pollycrates who told his friend the secret of his heart, how he believed this star was the sign of the birth of the One who would remake the world and save it with new knowledge from its unbelief and fears. "Tomorrow," he said quietly, "I shall leave for the Holy City."

End of Book One

BOOK II

Pilgrims to the Holy City

A Swing Across the Desert

A Caravan to Jerusalem

O'er Sea and Land

The Birthplace of a King

A Swing Across the Desert

For seven days Tisaphernes and his servant rode across the vast plains and deserts that stretch from Babylon to Damascus. Tisaphernes had studied the route carefully before beginning the journey so every day as the sun soared to his meridian he and his servant and steeds rested beside still waters under the shade of waving palm trees. On the evening of the seventh day Tisaphernes rode exultingly through the eastern gate of the home city of Benjamin. He found a good inn and before lying down he offered a prayer of gratitude for a safe journey thus far, and taking one long and loving look at the star he retired to dream of his quest.

A Caravan to Jerusalem

As Tisaphernes and his servant journeyed from Damascus to Jerusalem they overtook a party of merchantmen traveling in a big caravan. Mounted upon one of the camels sat Benjamin, his face radiant like the new born star itself. As all were now moving up the steep ascent caused by the hills that rise from the Jericho road up to Jerusalem none could go very fast so all kept together in a friendly group.

Benjamin thought he saw in the face of Tisaphernes evidence of a spiritual joy similar to that which surged in his own heart. He inquired therefore, "Dost thou also seek the promised child?" Tisaphernes answered, "I do," and added, "We shall meet again."

O'er Sea and Land

When one of the trading vessels set its sails for the open sea in the Piraeus, the port of Athens, it carried the distinguished Pollycrates. Driven by favorable winds the ship soon came to the port of Ephesus. The first man to step aboard was Samuel, the merchant, whose eager, happy look bespoke a great joy of the soul. Pollycrates watched this fellow passenger and after some time he spoke to him in the Greek language which was the common tongue of that day, asking, "Seeketh thou Him who will give to the world newer, bigger ideas, indeed, a new and better system of life?" Samuel answered, "I seek the son of the house of David who shall reign in righteousness, and who shall judge the nations with justice."

These men on the same quest had sweet fellowship as their voyage continued to the great port of Joppa where they were taken ashore in small boats

and were just in time to catch a Roman coach bound for Jerusalem. At the very moment when they arrived at the Damascus gate, Tisaphernes and Benjamin were passing through.

The Birthplace of a King

Ten days had passed since these four men first saw the star. After the evening meal and a short rest they all prepared to journey to Bethlehem where the babe Jesus had been born and cradled in a manger.

Tisaphernes bade Benjamin ride on one of his steeds, while Pollycrates and Samuel unknown to the others made their way to the birthplace in a picturesque oriental carriage. When the Greek and the Jew had given their presents and were rising, the Persian and Samaritan were just kneeling to present their gifts. As they arose from paying their homage to the new born God-Man all hearts were inspired and drawn to one another by their common hope and love.

The Greek was the first to speak and he said, "Friends, I have found what I have been searching for in the pages of history, philosophy and religion. I shall live in the spirit of this revelation of God." The Jew answered, "Our Holy

Books tell us of a Messiah, an Anointed One of God for the saving of the nations; I believe this is He." The Artisan said, "God hath promised to raise up a man from among us to be the Savior of all, a Judge who will reign in Justice, an Elder Brother, a Comrade who will love the common people." The Persian said, "And He shall be 'King of Kings' and 'Lord of Lords.' I will follow the inspiration of this day."

End of Book Two

BOOK III

The Spread of the Christmas Spirit

War and Peace

Prince and People, a New Kingdom

"To Do Justly, and to Love Mercy"

Ideas and Ideals

War and Peace

These four friends agreed to band themselves together and to go forth to spread the spirit of the infant Jesus and the first Christmas Day. After some discussion they made their plans and started toward the northeast mounted on four of the finest Arabian steeds. After three days' journey they came near to the city of Damascus. It was eventide and the sun was sinking in a bed of red clouds with edges of gold. The crimson colors of the clouds were reflected on the great white walls of the city and gave them a warm, inviting glow. The keeper of the gate allowed them entrance after a brief conversation.

As they proceeded to the quarters of the artisan they met a great, rioting mob of men. Benjamin recognized some of these men as his comrades and began to question them. They told him that they were being poorly paid and sorely oppressed. He said he would do what he could for them and asked some of them to go with him and his three friends and

talk their troubles over with their employers. During the conference an agreement was reached and many wrongs and misunderstandings on both sides were righted. The employers and the men were so happy that they arranged a big banquet for Benjamin and his companions. Many speeches of gratitude were made and a purse of gold was offered to Benjamin, who refused, saying, "I am glad to hear your kind words of gratitude because of the harmony we have restored. My aim is to help all men live in goodwill. I desire to see them love and serve one another. But, comrades, I must refuse your gold for myself, however, if you wish I shall place it with the exchangers and you all can add to it on every Christmas Day what you can afford and use it as a fund for those who have misfortunes." But they all cried out that he should take the gold and use it in his good works of bringing the children of men into unity. This he agreed to do. When the four friends saw peace ruling and the men all at work and happy, Tisaphernes invited the others to ancient Babylonia.

Prince and People, a New Kingdom

For several days they journeyed across the great desert that stretches between Damascus and Babylonia trying to stop always at some oasis for the night. At last the great walls of Babylon, eighty feet high, appeared. Almost the first thing that the Prince heard was that some men had stirred up a rebellion while he was absent and that many had been killed and much property destroyed. He asked these men to meet him and see what injustice needed to be eliminated. They told him many things he did not know about his own princedom, of the graft and oppression, of incompetence, of class snobbishness and hatred. He at once set to work to know his people and to rule in the spirit of Christ. He asked men of all classes to assist him in many necessary reforms. He swore that all should have equal rights and that justice should be his motto. Everything was done to help increase the health, intelligence, morals,

prosperity and happiness of the people. It soon became known throughout the world that this kingdom was the best of all on the earth. The people wished to shower many costly gifts on him, but he refused, saying, "My joy is to do these things. I have seen a new light." And then he added, "Our aim," meaning himself and his three friends, "is to see a kingdom owned by all and ruled by all and receiving the loyalty of all." Order being restored and harmony established and Democracy in Spirit at work in the realm the other three accepted the invitation of Samuel to go to Ephesus.

"To Do Justly and to Love Mercy"

When they came to this city Samuel found much to do in his factories and stores. He first of all decided not to employ any young children. The women were to receive better wages and those who were soon to become mothers or had just become mothers were given leave of absence with full pay. He improved the conditions in all ways, obtaining physicians and teachers who instructed the men and their families in better habits of life. In many cases wages were raised. He built a big hall where the men met and discussed their problems and enjoyed a common social life. It soon became known that Samuel had the happiest and most efficient workmen in all Asia Minor. He was thereby made very happy himself. One strange thing about it all was that the more Samuel did for the people the more interest they had in their work and the more good will for society. He paid bigger wages but his profits were increased. A part of these

increased profits he shared with his men. The public had a kindly feeling toward him and his goods were in great demand. But one day a manufacturer berated him for doing these things. Samuel explained all to him, and he, too, began to get a bigger and better vision. Samuel said, "Have you ever read these words from one of our Prophets? 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' "

Ideas and Ideals

Having arranged their matters in Ephesus the four men sailed to the intellectual center of the world, Athens, the home of philosophy, art, and science. Pollycrates went to the Agora where he daily preached the message of a new spirit among men and a new kingdom of good will. Many students from every quarter of the globe heard him and many believed his message. These believers went back to their homes and preached the gospel of "Glory to God in highest, on earth peace, good will among men." Soon the tidings found their way into countless hearts. Pollycrates had now left off teaching and had become a preacher of this new gospel. His influence could not be estimated for he inspired many keen and earnest young men who devoted their lives to preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, that is righteousness, justice and service among all men, and to establishing that kingdom in practical ways. They founded schools

where the children of the poor were taught the various sciences of the day. Some of them studied the problems of disease and built laboratories in which they made experiments and aimed to discover the causes of pestilences. Then and there was born that glorious boon to man the science for the prevention of disease. Some of these young men even allowed themselves to be experimented upon in order to increase human knowledge and power in dealing with these great problems of the vitalizing and prolonging of life. They sacrificed themselves but they saved millions of men.

Art, philosophy, poetry, music, religion, morals and sciences were all lifted to a higher plane as a result of the life and teachings of Pollycrates and his followers.

End of Book Three

BOOK IV

The Generous Christmas Spirit

Gifts from the Nation

Gifts from the Masses

Gifts from the City

Universal Brotherhood

Gifts from the Nation

For many years there stood in the Capital of Tisaphernes' kingdom a magnificent Congress Hall erected by the people in admiration of the spirit of their prince. To this hall the representatives of the people came and made laws to enrich the life of the nation. The Spirit of Christmas was in the land and all were happy. This hall stood and was a center of great good for centuries until some wild men in great hordes who knew not the value of civilization, swept down from the mountains to the east and over ran the land and destroyed its buildings. Even then the power remained and began to mould the lives of these new peoples into better forms. Thus did the Spirit of Christ prevail.

Gifts from the Masses

In Damascus the friends of Benjamin built a great club house where the common people met and where a fine spirit of comradeship was always present. It was the spirit that Benjamin had brought to the people from his Christmas visit to the infant Christ. No one can ever tell what that influence meant to the city of Damascus in wealth, health, achievement and happiness.

Gifts from the City

In Ephesus the social work begun by Samuel was followed by other manufacturers and merchants who got the vision that their human materials were the most valuable of all, for it is the human genius that has the creating, transforming power and that makes the raw materials into the desired products. The status of all grades of society was lifted up, wealth was more abundant and its distribution more just. Parks, playgrounds and theatres were given to the city to be used by all the people. A large new stadium was built by the city and dedicated to the social and spiritual uses of all the citizens.

Universal Brotherhood

Athens had been famed for centuries because of its wonderful buildings, but the Temple built by Pollycrates and his friends added new glory to this city of glory. This Temple was now the rarest gem in Athens' brilliant crown which sparkled from her brow, Mars Hill. Pollycrates preached his new gospel in this Temple which was continually filled, for the Athenians being intellectual, were interested in all new ideas. Many young men felt their minds being recast and their souls reborn as they listened to the teaching of this man who had found in his Christmas visit to the promised child a truer and bigger interpretation of the ideas of The Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man. One day he said, "Because God is the Father of us all, we all are Brothers and ought so to live as to be known as Brothers." He enlarged this idea of Brotherhood to extend beyond Athens and the Athenians, beyond Hellas and the Hellenes, yes,

beyond any group of men so as to embrace all men. The ideal of the Universal Brotherhood and Democracy of Man fired the fresh and unprejudiced minds of many young men to such an extent that they went in all directions to preach this word. Their theme was really always the one the shepherds heard on the first Christmas eve, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will among men."

End of Book Four

BOOK V

The Immortality of the Christmas Influence

The King is Dead, Long Live the People

A Gala Day in Ephesus, Remoulding Society

His Last Words

The King is Dead, Long Live the People

Years passed and there was a great gathering in the city of Tisaphernes who had now grown old and wished to pass the government on to his son, whom he had trained to love the people, and be one with them and rule with equity and justice as a Prince of Peace. The Congress Hall was thronged and Tisaphernes sat upon his throne. He knew this would be his last speech to the people but he was cheerful. He said, "My beloved friends and fellow countrymen, the time is slowly and surely coming when the Spirit of Christmas will reign in our parliaments and lead all men towards peace, brotherhood and service. Some day, it may be ages away, we shall look back with shame upon our horrible national hates and our cruel murderous wars, and forward with pride to the coming of the Universal Man. There will be a day when the war drum throbs no more and the battle flags are furl'd, in the Parliament of Man, in the Feder-

ation of the World." A mighty shout of joy filled the hall when these words were spoken. But the effort and joy of the occasion were too much for Tisaphernes, who fell forward and was caught in the arms of his son. He smiled serenely and moved his lips gently. His son bent down and listened, and he thought he heard these words, "The Star of Bethlehem! The Star of Bethlehem! O Mazda, I thank thee that I found the promised child and that my realm has known the Christmas Spirit." His son listened again but heard no more.

Babylonia never before saw such a tribute of love as was the funeral of this Prince who tried to make the spirit of Christ prevail in his realm.

A Gala Day in Ephesus, Remoulding Society

On one of the gala days in Ephesus a most unique group of people gathered in the great park which had been presented to the city by Samuel. This group of people was composed of Samuel and all the men who worked with him and their families.

Here was a real picnic in which Samuel and all his friends joined. Benjamin, who had now worked with Samuel for some years in looking after the personal interests of the men, was directing the picnic to a certain extent, though, to be frank, the people all knew one another and felt so free that they found their own enjoyment. This park was filled with amusements for persons of all ages. In the midst of it was a big pavilion where there were addresses, music and dancing. One could travel to the bounds of the earth and not find a happier group of people.

As the afternoon was wearing away

into evening and the purple haze was settling about the distant mountains, Benjamin and Samuel watched the families reuniting to leave for their prosperous and happy homes. Samuel was overjoyed and said, "Our visit to Bethlehem on that Christmas Eve long ago has been the greatest inspiration of our life. This all is the fruit of that Christmas Spirit. How much more valuable is humanity than materials and persons than property! O, that the industrial world could get our vision! I believe it would solve our problems, bring us peace, exalt, enrich and unify all classes of men." The joyful expression of Benjamin's face was evidence that he agreed with Samuel. He simply nodded and said, "The call of Christ is to all, and the Spirit of Christmas is for all. The man of Nazareth being one of our common humanity holds in His gospel the elements of a common salvation."

His Last Words

Pollycrates had built an Academy adjacent to his Temple in which he trained young men for teaching the world the new message of enlarged and enriched life. His work in this respect could not be estimated in external ways for it was inner, pervasive, spiritual. Being a leader of thought his name spread further than those of his friends. His followers revered him. Perhaps his great age and his venerable appearance added to the reverence which all had for his learning and charming manners.

Pollycrates was now in his eighty-fifth year and while his eye was bright and his mind clear, his body was worn. He often expressed the belief that he would some day pass quietly to join his friends, Tisaphernes, Benjamin and Samuel, who had finished their labors here but whose work was still going on.

One day in the spring of the year 25 A. D., Pollycrates instructed his students

with more earnestness than ever before. It was the last rush of the mighty waters of his soul, it was, alas, the last blaze of the dying embers of his life. He slept well that night and arose cheerfully the next morning. After a light breakfast and an hour spent in meditation his mind turned to the land of Judea and the visit he made there years ago. He turned his face to the south and beheld in a vision the promised child grown to manhood and saw a pure white dove descending and alighting upon his head bearing the approval of God, and he heard a voice saying, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Then Pollycrates looked again and saw this man talking to a great multitude who heard him gladly. The vision slowly faded and Pollycrates' eyes seemed to grow dim. He turned to his table and took his pen. He wrote a few words and then folding his arms on the table he placed his head upon them as

he had been wont to do for years when engaged in thought or reveries. A deep silence settled in that room. An immense angel of love and good will seemed hovering above him.

This was the day that Pollycrates, his students and friends were to meet in the Temple to rejoice at the return of spring and to give thanks for the spread of their gospel and the great increase of their followers.

One of his friends and teachers who lived with him and who watched him went to his study door and saw him in his usual posture and called, "Father Pollycrates, the hour is almost come for our great service of joy." There was no movement, no reply. The friend drew near to the table with trembling. He placed his right hand gently on the shoulder of the old seer, and as he did he noticed a rare piece of vellum and on it the words Pollycrates had just written. He knew that his master had obtained

his long desired wish and had moved on into the realms of light with a joyful vision in his mind. He read the last words of his loved leader:

> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
>
> For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
>
> Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
>
> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.
>
> Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will among men.
>
> I pray * * * that they all may be one * * * that they may be made perfect in one * * * that the world may know * * *

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